

**Maj. Gen. Torrence Saxe**  
*Commissioner & Adjutant General*

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**Alaska National Guard**  
*Department of Military  
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By David Bedard

*176th Wing Public Affairs*

## **Alaska Air National Guard Airmen transport woman in labor from Newtok to Bethel**

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — Alaska Air National Guardsmen of the 176th Wing evacuated a pregnant woman experiencing medical complications Dec. 15, transporting her from the village of Newtok to Bethel. Newtok is located on the west coast of Alaska, approximately 115 miles west of the town of Bethel.

Alaska Air National Guard Capt. Brent Kramer, a senior controller at the Alaska Rescue Coordination Center, said the Alaska State Troopers requested military assistance after civilian aircraft couldn't evacuate her due to challenging stormy winter weather and the prolonged hours of darkness.

The AKRCC assessed the situation and requested assets from the 176th Wing who launched a 211th Rescue Squadron HC-130J Combat King II, and a 210th Rescue Squadron HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter carrying two pararescuemen (PJs) from 212th Rescue Squadron. Both aircraft can operate in adverse weather conditions and bring PJs with extensive medical training along every mission.

The HC-130 conducted air-to-air refueling with the HH-60, granting the helicopter the range necessary to make the nearly 500-mile non-stop transit from JBER to Newtok. Between refueling missions, the crew of the HC-130 carried out a reconnaissance of the route to guide the Pave Hawk through deteriorating weather.

Village volunteers transported the patient via snowmachine to the Newtok air strip, where they met the helicopter. The patient was then transported to the Bethel Airport where they met an ambulance from the Bethel Fire Department.

Kramer credits the interagency partnership between the Alaska Air National Guard, the Alaska State Troopers, civilian medical personnel and the Bethel Fire Department, as well as the cooperation with the three rescue squadrons and the AKRCC for the success.

"It was good to get a chance to collaborate with our state partners and to see the work of the rescue community turn into a good outcome for the patient," he said.

For this rescue, 210th RQS, 211th RQS, 212th RQS and AKRCC were awarded one save.

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